

**US-131**  
**PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENTAL**  
**LINKAGES (PEL) STUDY**



**Phase 1**  
**Public Engagement Survey Report**  
*February 17, 2021*

## Purpose

The purpose of the US-131 PEL Study is to identify options to enhance the conditions, safety, and operations of the US-131 freeway between M-11 (28th Street) in Wyoming and the S-Curve, around Market Avenue near downtown Grand Rapids. The audience for this study is the general public who use the corridor, the public who lives and works within the study area, and key stakeholders such as the business community, healthcare institutions, and motorists. Public engagement is being conducted as part of the study in three phases, this report including results from the first phase of public engagement.

## Overview

This first phase of engagement aimed to educate the public about the US-131 Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) study and MDOT's current understanding of issues, gather direct insight from the public about their experiences in the corridor and study area, and collect feedback from the public on the draft purpose and need statements and evaluation criteria. The public was invited to participate in an online MetroQuest survey and was provided a video outlining the purpose of the study and the existing conditions research to assist with informed decision-making. The public engagement materials were provided in English and Spanish. A total of 2,104 individual survey responses were received, including English and Spanish survey responses.

The MetroQuest survey was open on December 9, 2020 and closed on Feb 8, 2021 end of day. It consists of 4 sections:

### What are the corridor needs?

While some initial ideas about what needs exist were developed as identified through earlier engagement efforts, public feedback is also valued in the process.

### What issues or needs do you see?

In this section, the public are invited to do the mapping exercise and share more about the needs and issues within the corridor at specific locations.

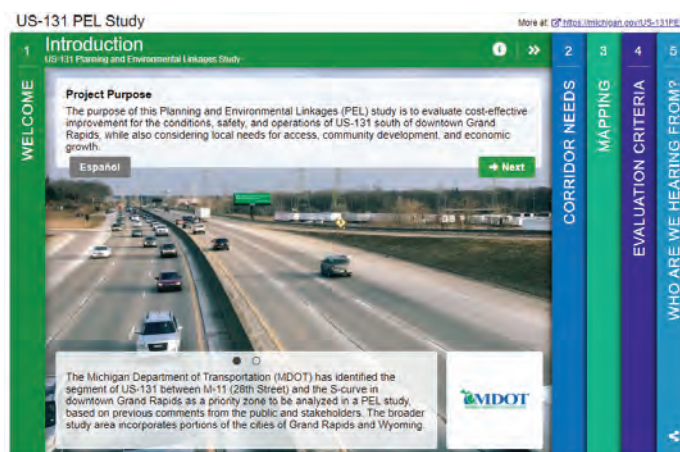
### What considerations do you suggest for evaluating alternatives?

The design alternatives developed to address the project needs will be evaluated to determine which solutions best addresses all project needs.

### Tell us about your interest in this corridor.

In this section, the public are invited to share more about who they are and why they have chosen to participate in the process.

**MetroQuest Survey Demo:** <http://demo.metroquestsurvey.com/gfd21>



Zip Code Residence

Among all survey participants, around 69% of them chose to answer demographic questions. The MetroQuest survey participants come from a wide range of area in West Michigan. Participation by zip code residence was the highest in downtown Grand Rapids in the northern part of the study area, followed by Wyoming, Kentwood and Byron Center.

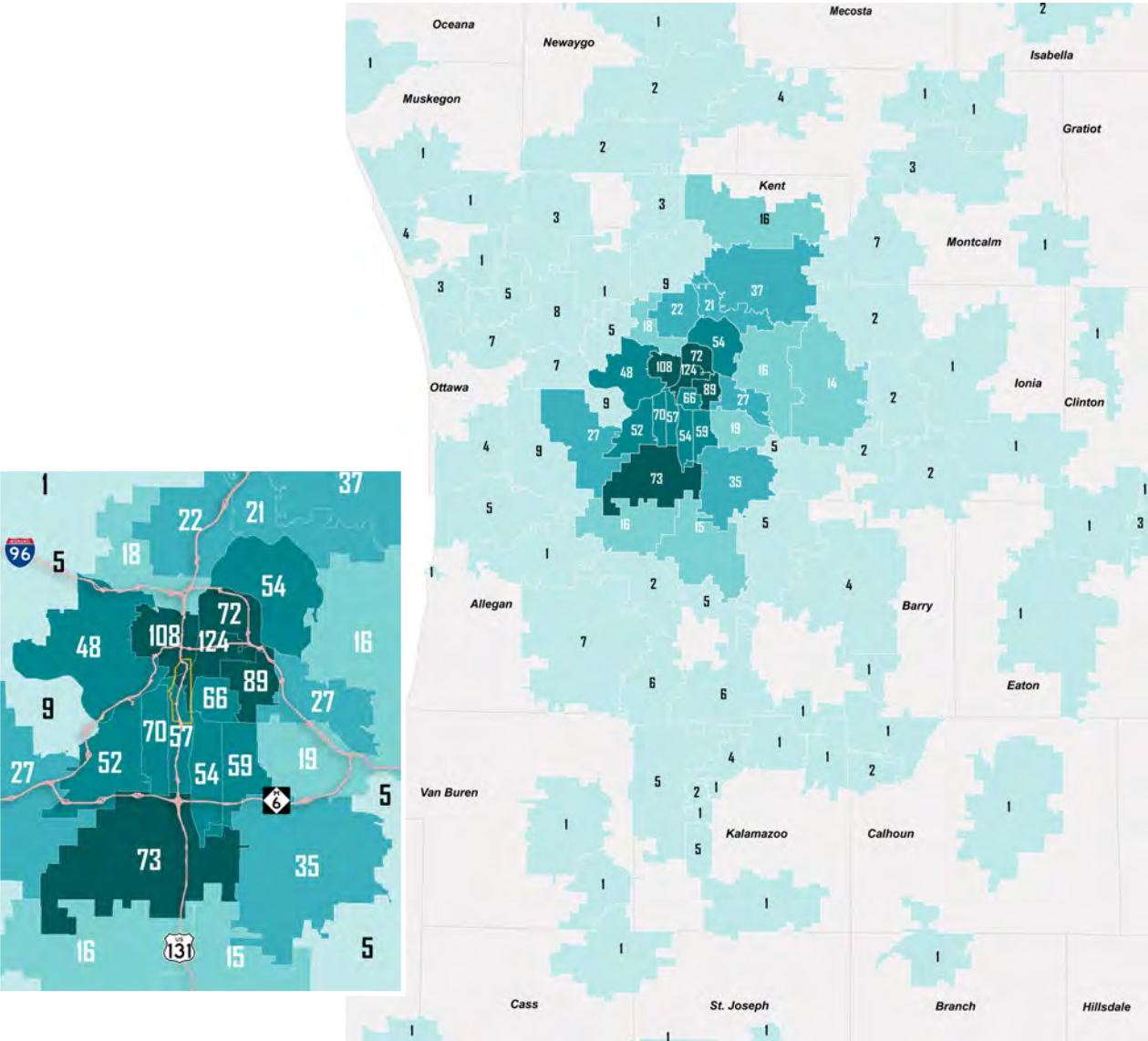


Figure 1. Number of survey participants by zip code residence

Demographics

Participation by age, race and income are shown in the charts below. Most of participants think US-131 PEL project is important because they “frequently commute along this segment”.

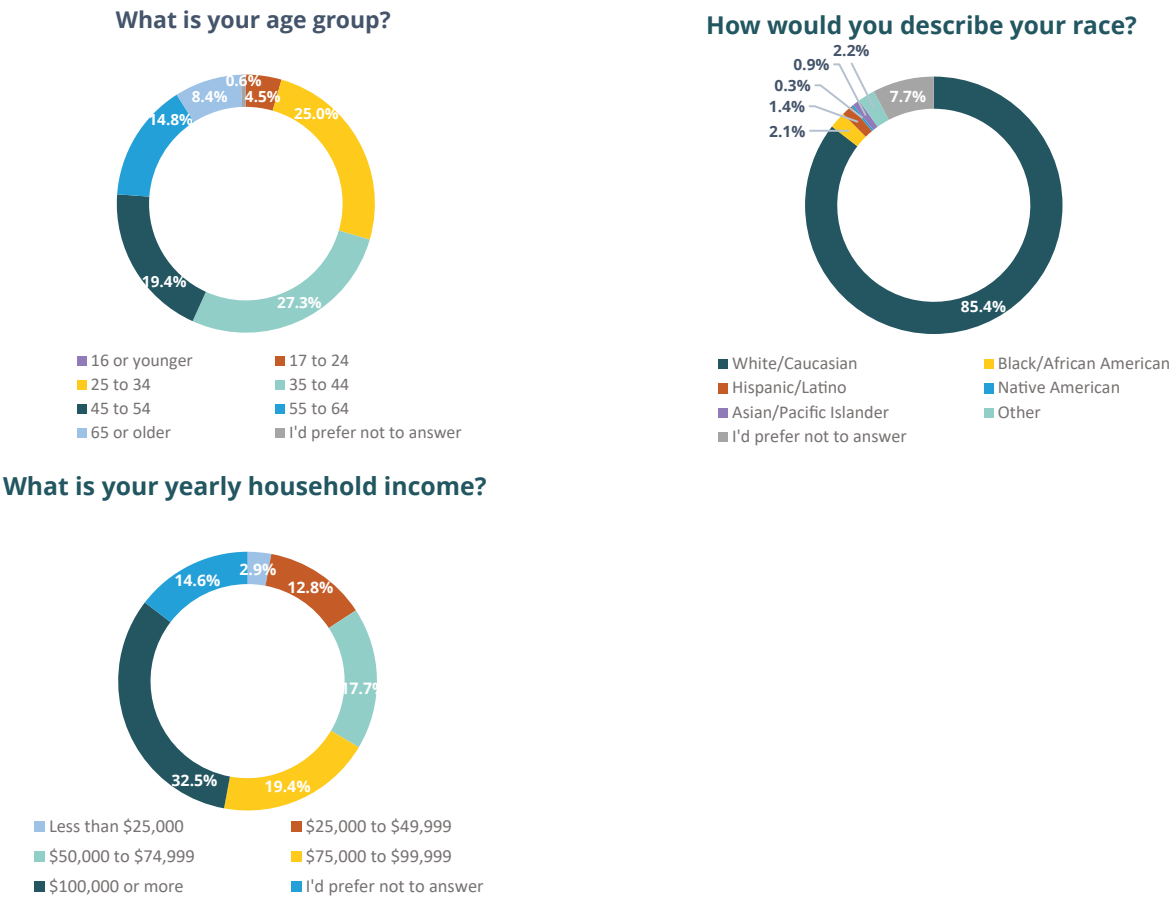


Figure 2. Participation by age, race and income

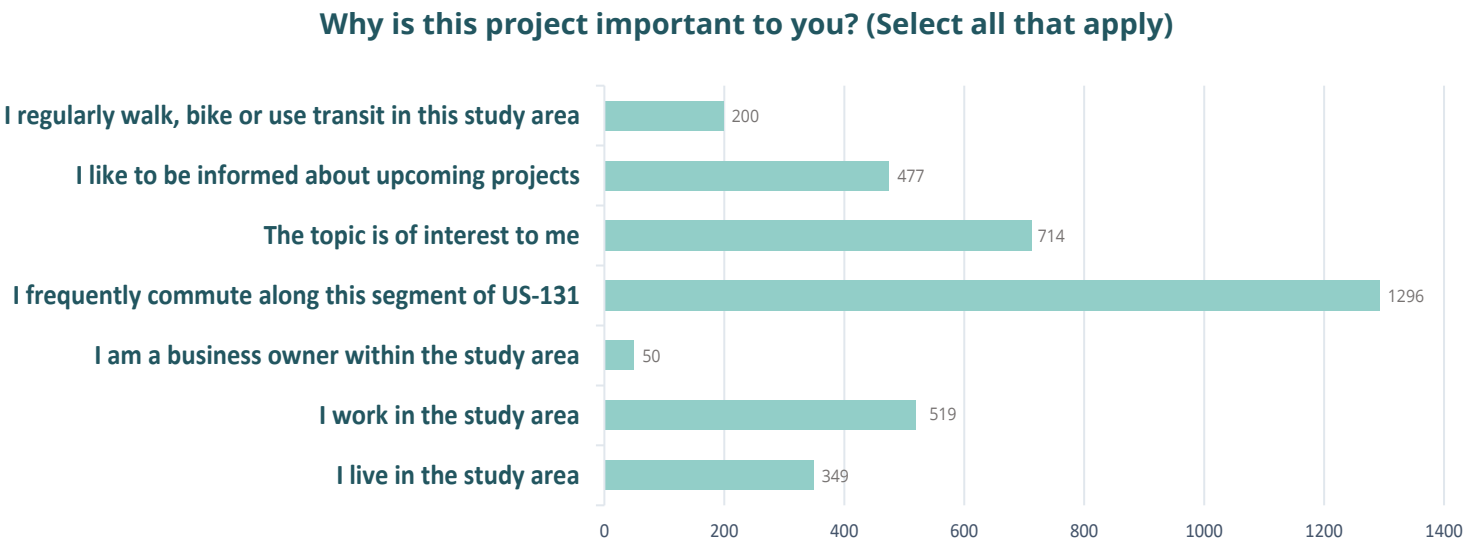


Figure 3. Reasons why participants think the project is important



Traffic Operations

Over 50% of participants rate **Congestion Issues** and **Interchange Issues** as the “most important” needs. Opinions on **Public Transportation Circulation** are split evenly at all importance levels.

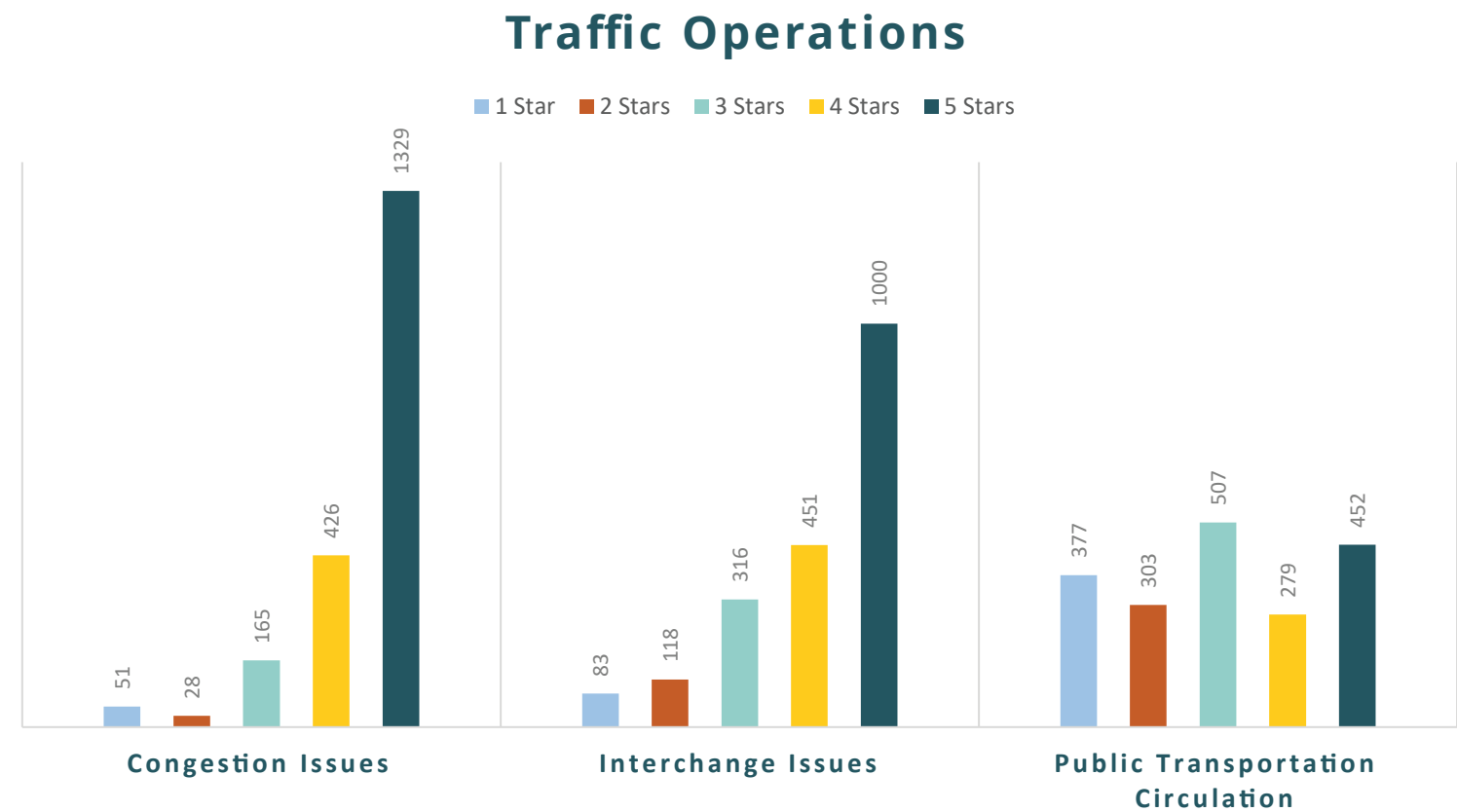


Figure 4. Traffic Operations needs rating results  
5 Stars = most important; 1 Stars = least important

Comment Highlights



Congestion Issues

- Congestion, particularly north bound towards the southern end of the corridor
- Remove / modify exits
- Crashes causing back-ups
- Toll lane

Number of comments:122



Interchange Issues

- Left lane on and off ramps are a problem
- Short ramps/merging lanes in heavy traffic / congestion
- Re-design interchanges

Number of comments:171



Public Transportation Circulation

- Concerns about public transit use and benefit
- Public transit on east-west, non-highway roads

Number of comments:61

Safety

Both **Safety** and **Emergency Vehicles and First Reponders** are rated as “the most important” by over 50% of survey participants.

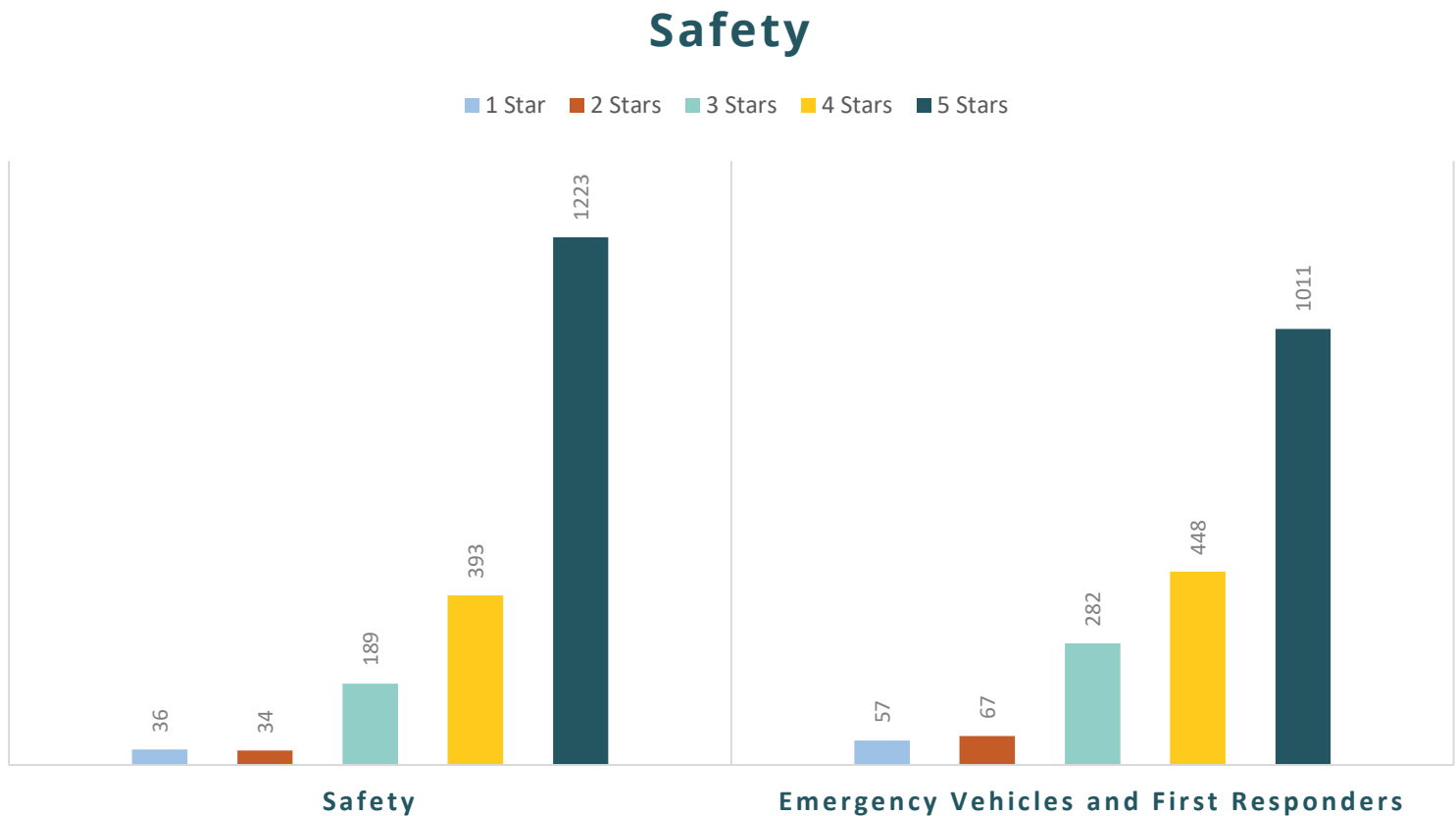


Figure 5. Traffic Operations needs rating results  
5 Stars = most important; 1 Stars = least important

Comment Highlights

**Safety**

- S-Curve is sharp and narrow with limited sight distance
- Cars merging and changing lanes near interchanges
- Vehicle travel speed is too high
- Sudden traffic backups

Number of comments:97



**Emergency Vehicles and First Responders**

- Lack of emergency lanes or shoulders for first reponders to either pass or stop safely for accidents
- Consider improving alternative routes

Number of comments:56



# WHAT ARE THE CORRIDOR NEEDS?

## Infrastructure

**Aging and Condition Issues** are highly rated as “the most important”. While opinions about **Local Street Grid + Nonmotorized Connections Across the Freeway** are more evenly distributed. The number of people who think the need is “the most important” slightly took the lead.

### Infrastructure

1 Star 2 Stars 3 Stars 4 Stars 5 Stars

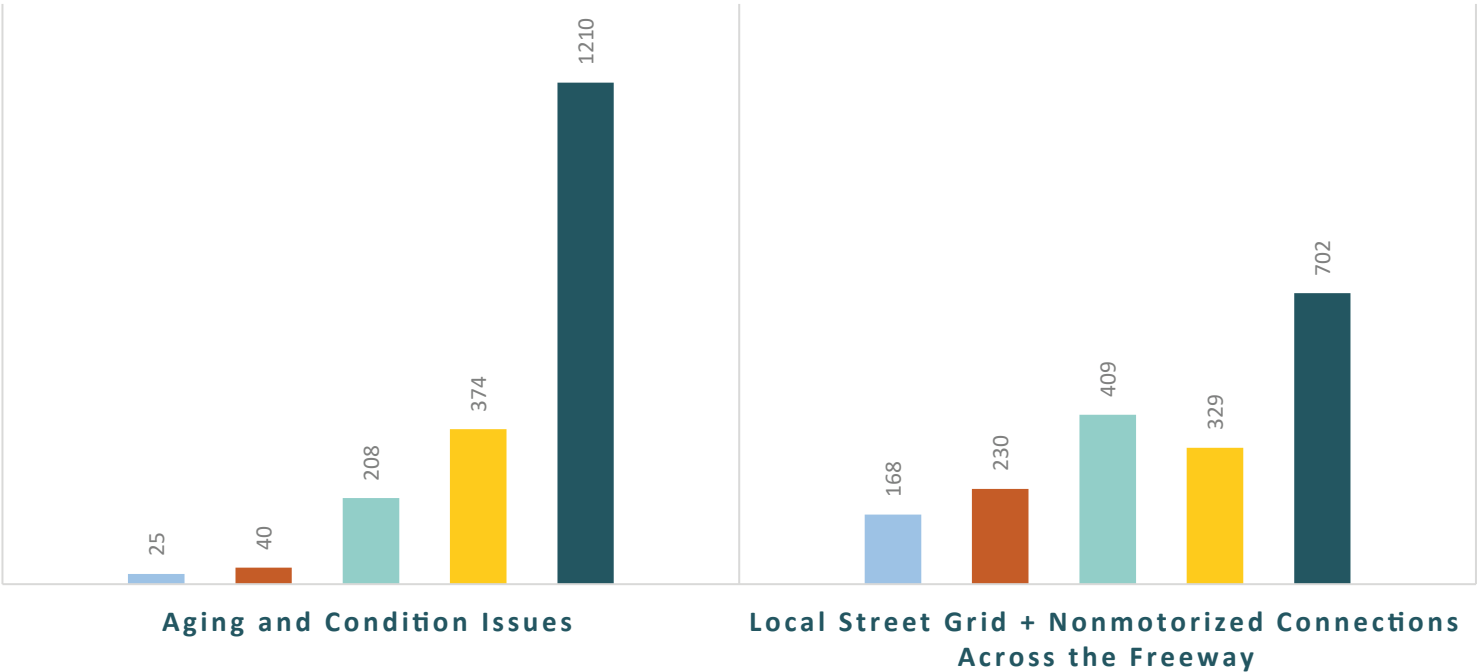


Figure 6. Infrastructure needs rating results  
5 Stars = most important; 1 Stars = least important

## Comment Highlights

### Aging and Condition Issues

- Poor Ramp, bridge and road conditions
- Pavement is rough and uneven, with patches and potholes
- Road design is outdated and not truck friendly

Number of comments:66



### Local Street Grid + Nonmotorized Connections Across the Freeway

- Add bike lanes at crossings that connect into the existing biking network
- Pedestrian infrastructure / connections
- Many crossings exist across US-131

Number of comments:88



Economy

*Metro and Regional Area* and *Freight Transportation* are rated as “the most important” by most of the participants.

Economy



Figure 7. Economy needs rating results  
5 Stars = most important; 1 Stars = least important

Comment Highlights

Metro and Regional Area Development

- Low number of lanes provided population and congestion
- Route express traffic in different lanes
- Infrastructure and maintenance upgrades
- Improve/advocate for other forms of travel

Number of comments:48

Freight Transportation

- Move freight to rail
- Circulate freight around the City / use alternate roadways
- Dedicated business loop
- Short merging lanes and narrow off ramps

Number of comments:57



# WHERE DO YOU SEE ISSUES?

## Number of Issues by Segment

Over 4000 map markers were placed and a number of issues were noted. The US-131 PEL study classified the study corridor into 4 segments by Wealthy, Franklin/Hall, Burton and 28th. Congestion and Safety are the most selected type of issues on all segments. Pavement, ramp and bridge conditions are the most serious near Franklin/Hall and Multi-modal issues are most marked near Wealthy and Franklin/Hall segments.

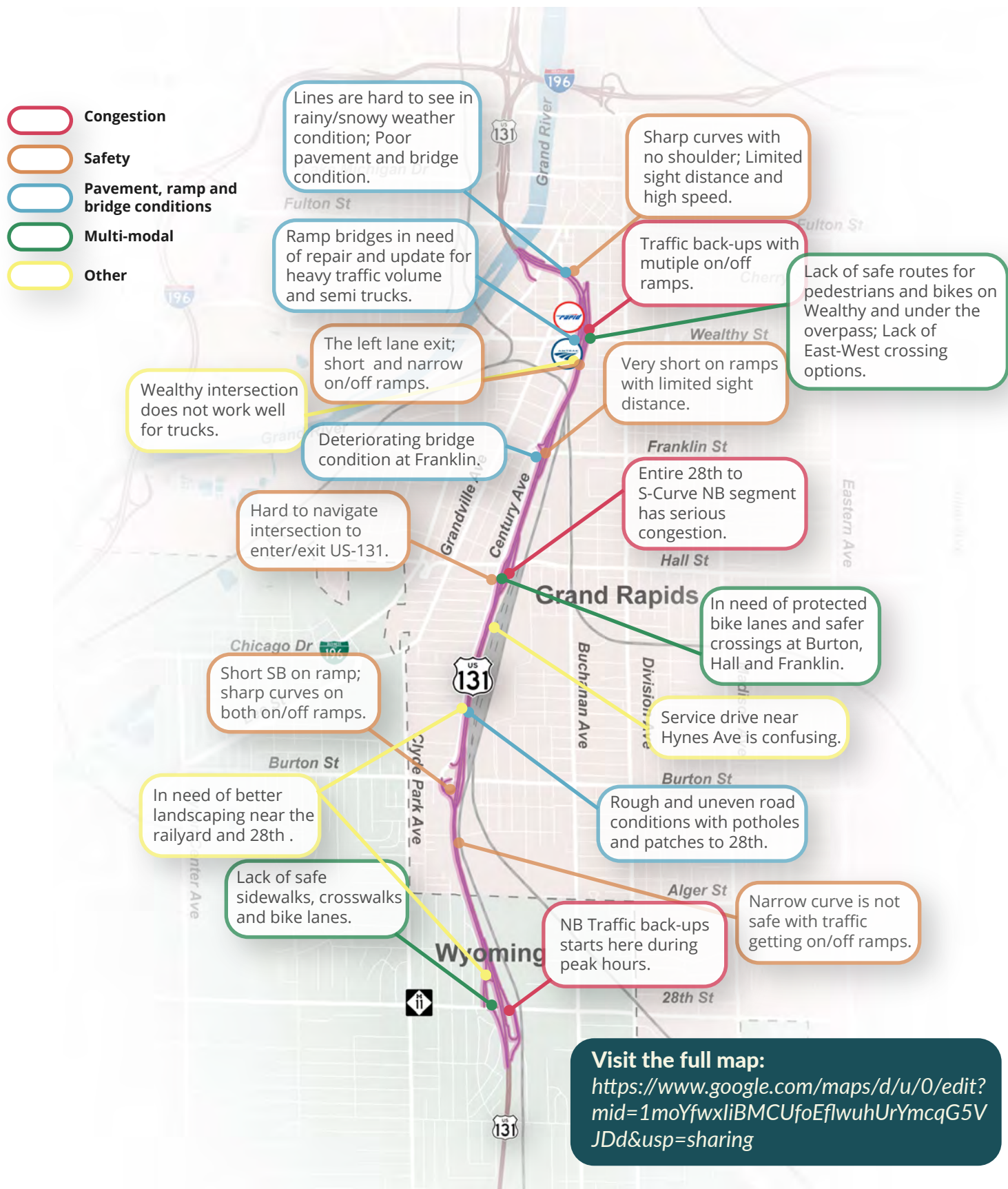


		Congestion	Safety	Pavement, Ramp and Bridge Conditions	Multi-modal	Other	Total
<b>1</b>	<b>Wealthy</b>	476	667	207	112	57	<b>1519</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Franklin/ Hall</b>	520	424	297	95	52	<b>1388</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Burton</b>	366	286	181	58	42	<b>933</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>28th</b>	226	89	74	39	18	<b>446</b>
	<b>Other</b>	161	87	32	36	21	<b>337</b>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1749</b>	<b>1553</b>	<b>791</b>	<b>339</b>	<b>190</b>	<b>4612</b>

Figure 8. Number of issues marked by segment.

## Comment Highlights

The comment highlights below were marked by participants and do not include all issues. For all comments, please visit the link for the interactive map. In general, **Congestion** and **Pavement, Ramp and Bridge Conditions** are consistent concerns along the study corridor.



Evaluation Criteria Results

*Congestion Reduction, Corridor Crash Reduction* and *Corridor Pavement + Bridge Conditions* are the top three selected and highest evaluation criteria.

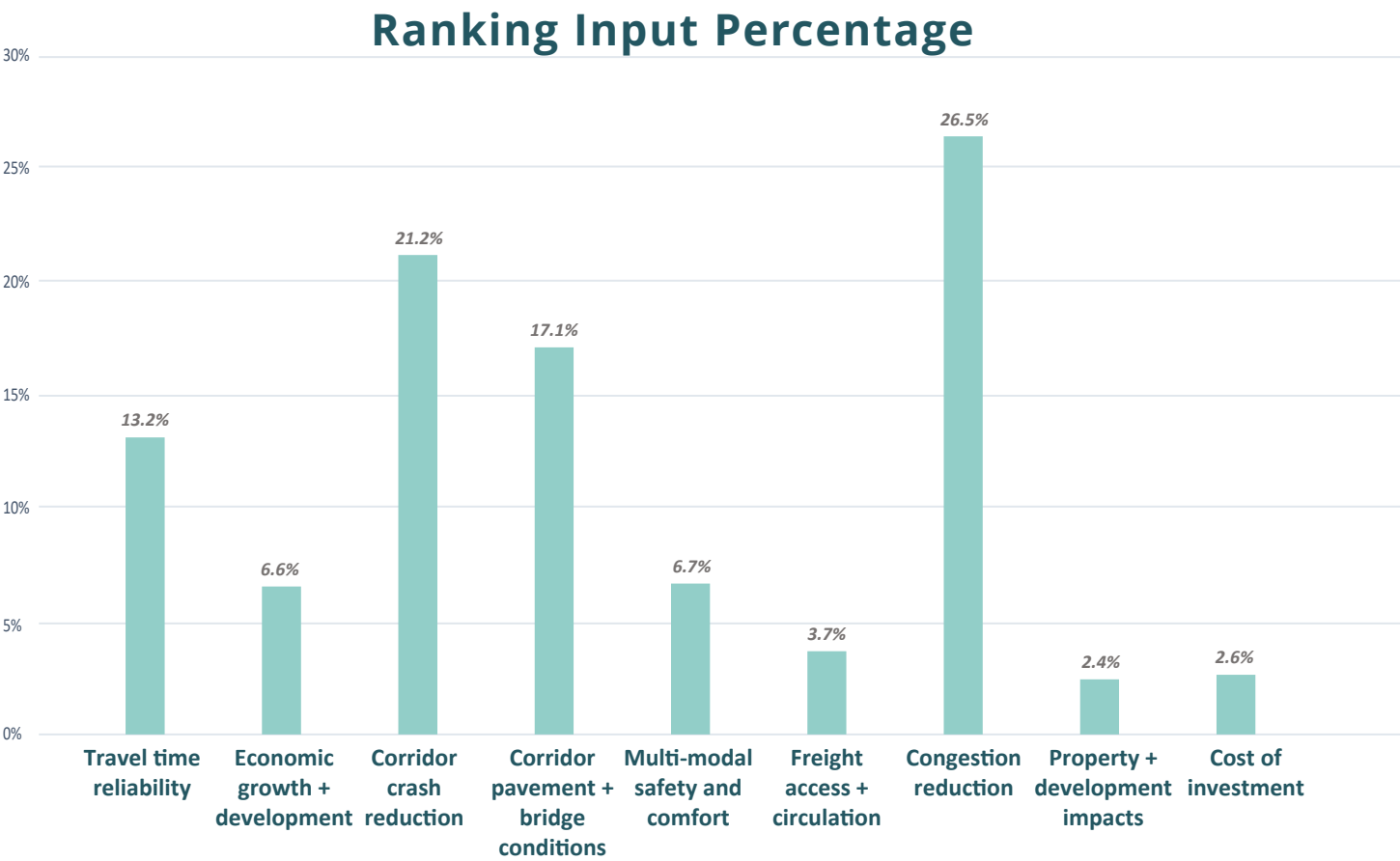


Figure 9. Ranking Input Percentage

**Ranking input percentage:**

Number of times each criteria is selected as the top three / Total number of times any criteria is selected as the top three

Next Step

The information gathered from this first engagement will be used to identify additional issues or considerations for investigation during the study. It also will be used to guide refinement and finalization of the purpose and need statement and evaluation criteria.